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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 ROME 003508

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

USUN FOR SHESTACK
STATE FOR IO/EDA: WINNICK AND JOHNSON; EB:KLEMM, HAUSER AND
PEREZ; EB/TPF/ATT WINTON; OES FOR HAROLD FOSTER
USDA FOR ED SCARBROUGH, USDA/FAS FOR CHAMBLISS; REICH/HUGHES,
USDA/APHIS FOR ENRIGHT/DUNAHAY
USAID FOR JOSETTE LEWIS

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USTR FOR RICHARD WHITE

FROM FODAG

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [AORC](#) [ETRD](#) [EAGR](#) [ETRD](#) [EAGR](#) [EAID](#) [UN](#) [FAO](#) [WFP](#) [EAID](#) [AORC](#) [UN](#) [FAO](#) [WFP](#)
SUBJECT: UN TO SEEK COMMON POLICY ON GMO FOOD AID?

1. (SBU) SUMMARY: FODAG HAS LEARNED FROM THE WORLD FOOD PROGRAM (PLEASE PROTECT) THAT THE UN SECRETARY GENERAL HAS ASKED HIS UNDER-SECRETARY GENERAL FOR HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS TO "TAKE THE LEAD IN FACILITATING THE DEVELOPMENT AND ARTICULATION OF A COHERENT SYSTEM-WIDE POSITION ON THE ISSUE OF IMPORTATION OF FOOD AID CONTAINING GENETICALLY MODIFIED ORGANISMS." WE BELIEVE THAT A MORE APPROPRIATE ROLE FOR THE UN WOULD BE TO FACILITATE THE PROVISION OF INFORMATION TO COUNTRIES CONCERNING CURRENT NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL POLICIES. END SUMMARY.

2. (SBU) THE WORLD FOOD PROGRAM (PLEASE PROTECT) PROVIDED FODAG WITH CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN THE UN UNDERSECRETARY GENERAL FOR HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS AND THE HEADS OF THE ROME FOOD AGENCIES IN WHICH UNDERSECRETARY OSHIMA STATES THAT THE UN SECRETARY GENERAL, "CONCERNED BY THE HUMANITARIAN SITUATION IN ZIMBABWE, AND PARTICULARLY THE CONCERNS EXPRESSED BY THE GOVERNMENT OF ZIMBABWE ABOUT THE IMPORTATION OF FOOD AID CONTAINING GENETICALLY MODIFIED ORGANISMS," HAS ASKED UNDERSECRETARY OSHIMA TO "TAKE THE LEAD IN FACILITATING THE DEVELOPMENT AND ARTICULATION OF A COHERENT SYSTEM-WIDE POSITION ON THE ISSUE OF IMPORTATION OF FOOD AID CONTAINING GENETICALLY MODIFIED ORGANISMS."

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(CORRESPONDENCE FAXED TO IO/EDA 7/10/02).

3. (U) THE ROME UN BODIES WITH RELEVANT POLICIES ARE: THE UN FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION'S (FAO) CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION (IS IT SAFE TO EAT?) AND THE WFP (CAN IT BE USED AS FOOD AID?). WE DO NOT KNOW IF UNDERSECRETARY OSHIMA HAS QUERIED OTHER UN BODIES.

4. (SBU) THE WFP RESPONSE TO OSHIMA'S REQUEST STATES THAT WFP ACCEPTS ONLY FOOD AID WHICH MEETS FOOD SAFETY REGULATIONS OF THE DONOR AND RECIPIENT COUNTRY AND WHICH MEETS CODEX STANDARDS. THE LETTER FURTHER STATES THAT "IT IS PROBABLY NOT A GOOD IDEA FOR A NONTECHNICAL BODY LIKE OCHA TO GET INVOLVED IN SETTING POLICY IN THIS AREA, OR WE COULD SOON BE AT ODDS WITH WTO, THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS AND MAJOR DONORS."

5. (SBU) THE FAO RESPONSE NOTES THAT NATIONAL POLICIES DIFFER ON THE SUBJECT, BUT STATES THAT THE FAO'S "POSITION" IS THAT THE CARTAGENA PROTOCOL SHOULD BE FOLLOWED ON THE QUESTION OF ENVIRONMENTAL SAFETY. (COMMENT: HOWEVER, THE FAO RESPONSE INCORRECTLY CHARACTERIZES SEVERAL ASPECTS OF THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE CARTAGENA PROTOCOL, INCLUDING IMPLYING THAT THE ADVANCE INFORMED AGREEMENT PROVISIONS FOR LIVING MODIFIED ORGANISMS FOR INTENTIONAL INTRODUCTION INTO THE ENVIRONMENT WOULD APPLY TO FOOD AND STATING THAT THE PROTOCOL STIPULATES THAT GRAIN SHIPMENTS SHOULD BE MILLED TO ENSURE GRAIN FOR FOOD WILL NOT BE PLANTED. END COMMENT.)

6. (SBU) CONCERNING FOOD SAFETY, THE FAO RESPONSE REFERS TO THE SCIENCE-BASED STANDARDS OF THE FAO/WHO CODEX

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ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION AND NOTES THAT THE CODEX AD HOC INTERGOVERNMENTAL TASK FORCE ON FOODS DERIVED FROM BIOTECHNOLOGY HAS DEVELOPED PRINCIPLES FOR THE SAFETY ASSESSMENT OF FOODS DERIVED FROM GENETICALLY MODIFIED SOURCES AND GUIDELINES FOR SAFETY ASSESSMENTS OF FOODS DERIVED FROM GENETICALLY MODIFIED PLANTS. (COMMENT: THE FAO RESPONSE DOES NOT MENTION THAT CODEX DOES NOT REQUIRE LABELING FOR GMO PRODUCTS. END COMMENT.)

6. (SBU) THE FAO RESPONSE CONCLUDES: "FAO BELIEVES THAT GOVERNMENTS MUST CONSIDER THE CONSEQUENCES OF STARVATION AND

MALNUTRITION FOR THE HEALTH OF THEIR POPULATIONS...AND
WHETHER THESE OUTWEIGH THE REMOTE POSSIBILITY OF INCREASED
RISKS TO HUMAN HEALTH FROM CONSUMING FOODS DERIVED FROM
MODERN BIOTECHNOLOGY AND THE ADDITIONAL RISK TO THE
ENVIRONMENT."

COMMENT

17. (SBU) CONFUSION (SOME POLITICALLY GENERATED, SOME

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ACTION IO-00

INFO	LOG-00	AF-00	AID-00	CIAE-00	CTME-00	DODE-00	EB-00
	EXME-00	EUR-00	EXIM-01	E-00	UTED-00	VC-00	FRB-00
	H-01	TEDE-00	INR-00	ITC-01	VCE-00	AC-01	NSAE-00
	OES-01	OIC-02	OMB-01	OPIC-01	ACE-00	SP-00	SSO-00
	STR-00	TEST-00	TRSE-00	USIE-00	G-00	SAS-00	/009W
				-----CC0D3B	161900Z	/45	

R 160815Z JUL 02
FM AMEMBASSY ROME
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4885
INFO USDA FAS WASHDC 2222
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
USMISSION GENEVA
USMISSION UNVIE VIENNA
USEU BRUSSELS 2743
AMEMBASSY HARARE
AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

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GENUINE) ON THE SUBJECT OF GMO'S IN FOOD AID IS HAMPERING
FOOD AID RELIEF EFFORTS. FODAG BELIEVES THAT THE FAO, IN
PARTICULAR, HAS FAILED TO LIVE UP TO ITS MANDATE TO EDUCATE
DEVELOPING COUNTRIES ON ISSUES FALLING WITH IT PURVIEW. WE
NOTE IN THIS REGARD THAT THE FAO RESPONSE TO THE OSHIMA
LETTER (SIGNED BY FAO DIRECTOR GENERAL JACQUES DIOUF)
INCORRECTLY CHARACTERIZES SEVERAL ASPECTS OF THE
REQUIREMENTS OF THE CARTAGENA PROTOCOL LABELING SYSTEM.
WITH ADVICE LIKE THIS, WE CAN ONLY FEAR FOR THE "SYSTEM-WIDE
POLICY" THAT MAY EMERGE. WE BELIEVE THAT A MORE APPROPRIATE
ROLE FOR THE UN WOULD BE TO FACILITATE THE PROVISION OF
INFORMATION TO COUNTRIES CONCERNING CURRENT NATIONAL AND
INTERNATIONAL POLICIES. HEILEMAN

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